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Pest/Disease Occurrences

Avian Influenza: EU continues preparedness work 2005

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Report Highlights:

On September 22, 2005, European Member State (MS) Chief Medical Officers and Chief Veterinary Officers met to coordinate on a Avian Influenza (AI) and Influenza Pandemic Preparedness Plan. This meeting resulted from an EC call to the MS to increase and better coordinate their AI awareness and contingency plans. On September 6, 2005, the EC had already published guidelines for MS to enhance surveillance for AI in wild birds.

The Netherlands and Germany are recalling their measures to keep all poultry indoors, as a result of lack of EC support and because no new AI cases were reported in Russia and Kazakhstan.

Includes PSD Changes: No
Includes Trade Matrix: No
Unscheduled Report
Brussels USEU [BE2]
[E3]

On 22 September 2005, the Chief Medical Officers and Chief Veterinary Officers of the Member States reached the following [conclusions and recommendations](#)¹

On 22 September 2005, the Chief Medical Officers and Chief Veterinary Officers of the Member States (MS) met in Brussels to discuss the EU Avian Influenza (AI) and Influenza Pandemic Preparedness Planning. While no new measures were proposed at the meeting, CMO's and CVO's focused on coordinating preparedness between veterinary and medical services in case of an outbreak, as well as between MS. They also agreed that the European Commission (EC) should continue to work in close contact with FAO, OIE and WHO. The European Food Safety Authority's (EFSA) Panel on Animal Health and Welfare (AHAW), on September 20, 2005, had published a [Scientific Opinion](#)² on the risks of Avian Influenza for poultry in support of the CMO/CVO meeting. The Opinion provides recommendations to risk managers on different options to reduce the risk and contain the disease should poultry flocks become infected. The AHAW also addressed animal welfare aspects of AI. The most important risk factors identified are:

- the potential mutation of Low Pathogenicity Avian Influenza (LPAI) viruses into Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza (HPAI);
- the contact of poultry with wild birds (primarily migratory waterfowl);
- the legal and illegal imports of live poultry and captive caged birds;
- entry of infected poultry products into the animal feed chain;
- contact with other poultry products (faeces, litter, feathers and down).

[Avian Influenza and EU pandemic flu preparedness plan – Information note to the Commission by Mr Kyprianou](#)³ (September 1, 2005)

The meeting of EU MS CVO's and CMO's followed a note from Commissioner Kyprianou to the EC on the need for an "Avian Influenza and EU pandemic flu preparedness plan." The note followed after The Netherlands ordered all commercial poultry flocks to stay indoors as a result of the spread of AI in Russia and Kazakhstan, and other MS were considering taking steps too. The suspicion of AI in a seagull in Finland, which eventually proved to be Low Pathogenic AI, added to the commotion.

[Avian Influenza: Commission asks Member States to step up surveillance](#)⁴

However, the Standing Committee on the Food Chain and Animal Health (SCoFCAH), in a meeting on August 25, 2005, had considered a generalized ban on keeping poultry outdoors disproportionate. However, in its [conclusions](#)⁵, the SCoFCAH recommended that MS should introduce additional AI awareness programs for farmers, review and update existing AI contingency plans and ensure enforcement of controls at the external borders of the

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http://europa.eu.int/comm/food/animal/diseases/controlmeasures/avian/avain_influenza_22092005.pdf

² http://www.efsa.eu.int/press_room/press_release/1146_en.html

³

<http://europa.eu.int/rapid/pressReleasesAction.do?reference=MEMO/05/295&format=HTML&aged=0&language=EN&guiLanguage=en>

⁴

<http://europa.eu.int/rapid/pressReleasesAction.do?reference=IP/05/1068&format=HTML&aged=0&language=EN&guiLanguage=en>

⁵

<http://europa.eu.int/rapid/pressReleasesAction.do?reference=MEMO/05/285&format=HTML&aged=0&language=EN&guiLanguage=en>

European Union on any introduction of birds and their products. In a follow-up meeting on September 6, 2007, SCoFCAH proposed its "[Guidelines for Member States enhanced surveillance for avian influenza viruses in wild birds in the European Union – September 2005 to January 2006](#)⁶." This program enhances surveillance of living or hunted birds, as well as the monitoring of the occurrence of abnormal mortality in birds. At a September 13-14 meeting of SCoFCAH an additional budget of €883,700 for the AI surveillance plan of the 25 MS was approved to test over 207 thousand domestic birds and some 25 thousand wild birds.

The Netherlands and three German Länder⁷⁸ ease their precautionary ban on outdoor poultry.

The lack of support from the EC and other MS and the fact that no new cases of AI have been reported from Russia and Kazakhstan, led the Dutch Ministry of Agriculture to lift the measures to keep all poultry flocks indoor for most farms. Only poultry farms within a one km radius of migratory birds' feeding grounds can go out in the open air again only if they are in fenced-off areas with a roof. The three German Länder, which had restricted open-air access for poultry, are also expected to ease their measures.

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Report Number	Title	Date Released
GM5035	AI-Threat: German Poultry Must Stay Inside - But Only in Certain Regions	09/12/05
E35099	EU proposes new Directive to enhance the control of Avian Influenza (AI)	05/23/2005
E34084	EU Approves €188 Million to Fight Animal Diseases in 2005	11/05/2004
E24050	Contingency Plans for the case of an outbreak of Avian Influenza in the EU	3/10/2004
E24036	EU bans US poultry over Avian Influenza	2/25/2004

⁶

<http://europa.eu.int/rapid/pressReleasesAction.do?reference=MEMO/05/304&format=HTML&aged=0&language=EN>

⁷ <http://www.fas.usda.gov/gainfiles/200509/146130923.pdf>

⁸ Germany is a federation of 16 Länder (states)